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Directorate-General for Internal Policies
Directorate A - Economic and Scientific Policy
Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy and Quality of Life Unit

Joint Parliamentary Meeting on Climate Change Rising to the Challenge

Summary of Working Group 1: Adapting to climate change - National concepts

Co-Chairs: Mr Roberto MUSACCHIO (European Parliament)
Mr Mitja SLAVINEC (Državni zbor, Slovenia)
Rapporteur: Mr José Eduardo MARTINS (Assembleia da República, Portugal)

Main points in the debate

Contributions from representatives of National Parliaments¹

Representatives from national parliaments agreed that the Commission's Green Paper on "Adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action²" is a good common ground for discussion. "Adaptation's actions on specific policies" should be carried out in a synergic and complementary way between Member States and the European Union (concept of integrated approach).

'Adaptation' should be focused in particular on the following policies:

- Agriculture and the revision of the CAP reform;
- Research policy must lead future investments towards concrete actions to adapt to climate change; to explore models of adaptation.
- Free movements of persons and goods should be revised taking into account those areas which suffered climate disasters;
- Information campaign launched to involve citizens starting from a municipality level bottom-up to the European level; awareness raising policy among EU people.
- Solidarity policy among EU member States to avoid environmental dumping;
- National planning needed and definition of priorities both at national and European levels.

Contributions from MEPs

The main contributions from Members of the European Parliament focused on:

- Subsidiarity principle will require a new dimension;

¹ In chronological order spoke: Lithuania, Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Finland, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia.

² SEC(2007)849.

- A new reinforced form of dialogue must be launched among EU Institutions, MSs and local and regional authorities.
- to forge new plans to adapt to new climate and geographical conditions;
- Economic repercussions will occur but climate change will lead to institutional adaptation in the European Union from a cooperative point of view and information and communication elements.

Contributions from other Institutions/Organisations

A representative of the European Economic and Social Committee pointed out the importance of biodiversity losses and the inclusion of the sustainability concept for adaptation. Numbers of reports dealing with climate change have been prepared by EESC and there is an on going report on the inclusion of adaptation to climate change into the Lisbon strategy.

<p><i>Summary of Working Group 2: Renewable energies - European and national strategies, best practices</i></p>

Co-Chairs: Mr Claude TURMES (European Parliament, Greens)
Mr Antonio Ramos PRETO (Assembleia de República, Portugal)

Rapporteur: Ms Lena EK (European Parliament, ALDE)

Main points in the debate

Co-Chair in his introduction emphasised the set EU target of 20% RES by 2020 and pointed to two areas where the speakers' input would be particularly requested:

- a) Experience with and promotion of Renewables, in particular heating and cooling;
- b) Assessment of how much EU harmonisation is needed in the field of RES, in particular as regards support systems and subsidiarity.

The ensuing debate covered a broad spectrum of issues³; however some of the themes most discussed and most sensitive were as follows:

- There was general consensus that Renewables will be part of the solution to tackling Climate Change challenges. However, several pointed to **defining a balance between Renewables and increased Energy Efficiency** measures (NPs: IT, CZ, PT and MEP), one pointing directly to the danger of creating too high expectations to what Renewables can deliver (NP: UK). Several pointed to the seizing positive effects on job creation, technological innovation and economic opportunities (NPs: DE, GR; MEPs). Certain speakers pointed to the need for overcoming remaining economic and technological efficiency problems (NPs: PT, CZ).
- Many speakers stressed both the importance **global cooperation** and the need for the EU to act as good example and as a strong player in post-Kyoto negotiations. However, there were some concern when it comes to the issue of **burden sharing** within the EU, not least from the side of new member states (NPs: PT, HU, IT, RO). MEPs underlined the need for an honest debate of the costs of the Renewable target, whilst also assessing costs of in-action.

³ There were 24 interventions from the floor, 5 of which from MEPs. Further the co-chairs and the rapporteur spoke.

- The issue of **subsidiarity** was in particular emphasised.
 - Whilst MEPs in general spoke in favour of further harmonisation of certain elements (support systems, energy policy, state aid etc), few representatives from National Parliaments were directly in favour of this (NPs: FR), whilst more spoke in favour of flexibility, allowing for national solutions and taking regard of different national energy mix (NPs: DE, PL, IT, AU).
 - Linked to the debate of harmonisation was also the issue on ensuring a fair competition and liberalised internal market in the EU, also thorough implementation of adopted legislation (MEPs).
 - Linked to this discussion was Further the general concern for reducing dependency and hence increasing energy security (NP: PT, UK, DE). In connection with this, network access systems were also mentioned (MEPs).
- A further very sensitive issue was of course the **role of nuclear energy in the national and overall EU energy mix**. Some speakers stressed that regardless of nuclear energy not being a renewable it will be needed in the tackling of climate change (NPs: FR, FR, HU, IT). Linked to the discussion on energy mix, nuclear and burden sharing was interventions on the issue of increased **life cycle analysis of energy sources** to properly assess the long term effects and benefit of different energy sources (NP: AU, CZ), with the speaker from CZ directly suggesting a number of criteria for assessing Renewable energy sources allowing for wider interpretation of their impact.
- Many showed concern for the impact of the **transport sector** on climate change, and not least the future role of **biofuels** in the energy consumption and its potential impact on environment and traditional agricultural production, emphasising the **link between energy policy and agricultural policy**. (NAPs: AU, ES, PT, RO). Co-chair emphasised that the Parliament currently investigates the combined impact of biofuels production and changed diet in developing economies.
- On the side of **financing climate change** several issues were raised
 - The new Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GERREF) emphasised as a opportunity to show solidarity with developing countries, and aid technology transfer, but also an opportunity to aid further innovation in Europe (NP: SE; MEP). Other interventions focused more on the general principle of a fund within the EU (NP: RO, HU).
 - A few speakers ventured into the issue of possible fiscal measures with taxation as a basis for dealing with the cost of climate change, either through harmonisation of (green) taxes (NP: FR) or fiscal measures on national level to ensure individual responsibility (NPs: PT, FR), or more general a common approach to state aid to ensure common incentives in Member States (MEP).
 - The continued need for investment in R&D was emphasised by some (ES, PT). Co-chair stated that nuclear research is funded from the EU with as much as 5-8 times the funding of research in Renewables, and emphasised the need also for organisational innovation.

- Certain MEPs speakers addressed Specific Renewables, in particular the potential of **solar power** (NP: SE; MEP), and the future of **hydrogen** (MEP), and wind energy (NP: ET) was emphasised.

<p><i>Summary of Working Group 3: Reduction of emissions - building sector, modernisation of public and private housing</i></p>

Co-Chairs: Mr Alessandro FOGLIETTA (European Parliament)
Mr THUL (Deutscher Bundestag)
Rapporteur: Ms Glória ARAÚJO (Assembleia da República, Portugal)

Main points in the debate

In Europe, 40% of energy use comes from the building sector. Furthermore, there is a great potential for emission reduction within the building sector. The EU has the technology potential and can set an example for neighbouring countries. Higher energy efficiency helps the EU to both reach the emission reduction targets and achieve the Lisbon goals (through creation of new job opportunities).

Contributions from representatives of National Parliaments⁴

Emission reduction in the building and housing sector should focus on the following key-points:

People

- Consumer awareness-raising: changes in demand towards more energy efficient products will alter the supply.
- Training of people (consumers, builders, material producers): the technology is there, but a lot more technology transfer is needed.

Technology

- Technologies and applied measures need to be adapted to the local conditions;
- More investment needed in 'intelligent' systems that can store energy.

Spatial planning

- Town planning and housing are not an EU competence; subsidiarity must be respected.
- Inclusion of energy efficiency in the planning stage (e.g. distribution electricity and gas network; consideration of the thermal bridge between inside and outside).
- Use of appropriate areas for new buildings (e.g. competition land use for housing vs. biofuels).
- Strict (unfavourable) national rules may prevent proper actions at local/municipal level.

Investment costs/subsidies

- Existing dilemma's:
 - Landlords/owners have no interest in investing if they rent out their houses.
 - Low-income households have no money to invest in something which only gives return in the long term.

⁴ Speakers from National Parliaments: Sweden; Luxemburg; Lithuania; France; Finland.

- People tend to look only at the investment cost. EU incentives (such as low interest rate loans for the private sector) could make it more attractive for people to invest.
- Subsidies to compensate for the investments costs are needed as they can not always be passed onto the rental costs. However, the investments are beneficial for both the landlord and the tenant.

Best practices - Initiatives at Member State level

- Sweden
 - Obligatory Energy Declaration for all buildings (including old and commercial buildings). This also involves the use of ventilation coolers to prevent the formation of damp and mould.
 - Passive houses: heat recovery;
 - All town planning decisions at local level require a detailed impact assessment and an assessment of the local conditions.
- France
 - Brain storming exercise "La grenelle de l'environnement": creation of multi-stakeholder groups. The President intends to implement some of the proposals (expected end October) from the working groups.
- Finland
 - Certificates for heating and restrictions on size of housing
 - Draft text on banning the use of normal light bulbs

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